

Claims

1. Communications apparatus comprising a router and at least one
5 connection controller which router, in use, routing data to and from
terminals on a local area network and the connection controller
controlling connections involving at least one of the terminals to
another network, a network address translation translator for
translating addresses on incoming data to addresses of terminals on
10 the local area network; a monitor for monitoring the usage of a
network addresses and for sending a message indicative of non-usage
to the connection controller; the connection controller being
responsive to the receipt of the message to determine whether to
release the connection to the another network.
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2. Apparatus as claimed in claim 1 wherein the network address
translator includes a table of network addresses having associated use
state data.
- 20 3. Apparatus as claimed in claim 1 or 2 wherein the monitor is an IP
router.
4. Apparatus as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 3 wherein the
connection operates in accordance with a point to point
25 protocol(PPP).
5. Apparatus as claimed in claim 4 wherein the connection operates in
accordance with a point to point protocol(PPP) and at least one
additional protocol.

6. Apparatus as claimed in claim 5 wherein the at least one additional protocol is one of a point to point tunnelling protocol (PPTP) or a point to point protocol over Ethernet (PPPoE).

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7. Apparatus as claimed in any preceding claim wherein the connection controller is an entity on the router.

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8. Apparatus as claimed in claim 7 wherein the at least one connection controller is a software object.

9. Apparatus as claimed in any preceding claim wherein a plurality of respective connection controllers is provided each controlling a respective connection.

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10. Apparatus as claimed in any preceding claim substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to and or as illustrated by the drawing.

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11. A method of controlling a connection to a LAN to another network comprising:

providing a router connected by an interface to ports for applications running on terminals on the LAN;

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providing a connection controller for controlling the connection between the router and the another network;

monitoring use of the interface to the ports; and

in the event of the interface being unused for the connections to the ports sending a message to the network controller to break the connection between the router and the another network.

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12.A method as claimed in claim 11 wherein the use of a port is recorded in a network address translator table.

10 10. A method substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to and as illustrated by the drawing.